

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5346

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
State Government, February 1, 2017

Title: An act relating to creating a legislative page scholarship program.

Brief Description: Creating a legislative page scholarship program.

Sponsors: Senators Walsh, Rolfes, Zeiger, Hobbs, Warnick, Pedersen, Nelson, Darneille, Kuderer, Hunt, Keiser, McCoy, Honeyford, Fain, Liias, Cleveland, Sheldon, Conway, Pearson, Frockt, Wilson, Bailey and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State Government: 2/01/17, 2/01/17 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Gina Bull Memorial Legislative Page Scholarship program and account.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Miloscia, Chair; Zeiger, Vice Chair; Hunt, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer and Pearson.

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The Page program was established in 1891 and is a joint program of the House and Senate. Legislators sponsor the pages, who assist with the Legislature's work by making deliveries and performing other necessary tasks. Pages are hired as employees during the legislative session. Each student is required to make arrangements for their own food and lodging for the week that they serve the Legislature as part of the Page program.

Ethics statutes prohibit public employees and officials from engaging in activities, such as financial transactions, that pose a conflict of interest with regard to official duties. Exemptions allow officials to solicit gifts and various items of value for specified projects.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: This act establishes the Gina Bull Memorial Legislative Page Scholarship program (Program) to provide assistance to students based on financial need.

The Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives are authorized to:

- administer the Program;
- solicit and accept gifts and other specified items of value for the Program; and
- expend funds from the Legislative Page Scholarship account on the Program, except as limited by the donors' terms.

A new Legislative Page Scholarship account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer. Monies solicited may only be deposited in the Page Scholarship account and used to operate the Program. The account is subject to allotment procedures but an appropriation is not required.

Ethics statutes clarify that the Secretary of the Senate or Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, their designees, legislative members, and legislative employees, are not prohibited from soliciting and accepting contributions for the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill memorializes Gina Grant Bull who was a dynamic and thoughtful public servant who served the legislature and was very passionate about the Page program and making kids successful. Many members cannot fill their page positions with local students because of the difficulty of transportation each day. Gina had plans to research ways to get scholarships and additional funds to allow for students to participate in the page program, this bill would move her plan forward to bring this program to more students who may not otherwise be able to afford to participate. Nationwide there is a lack of education in the legislative process, the page program is a unique opportunity for students to experience the legislative process. The Page program also provides work experience to youth and teaches them how to be responsible. The youth in the program are the next generation of leaders in the state and for a small investment we can give the youth the tools they need to be successful. Free Masons are supportive of Free education for students and plan to support this program to provide this opportunity to children across our state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Maureen Walsh, Prime Sponsor; William Bart, Rep. Free and accepted Mason's of Washington; Mary Margaret Haugen, Senator; Lindsay Braun; Nova Gattman; Kristen LeMieux.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.